Seminar on big dams organised by national fishermen's forum

1106. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the participants in a seminar on "Protect water, protect life" which was organised by the National Fishermen's Forum during March, 1989 has demanded that Government may declare a memorandum on the construction of big dams in the country;

(b) if so, what is Central Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) what are the details of the points discussed in the seminar and the steps Government propose to take to provide relief to fishermen?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI): (a) The proceedings of the reported seminar have not yet come to notice of this Ministry.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Seizure of gold biscuits from Madras Airport

1107. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Customs authorities at Madras airport have seized Gold biscuits from air passengers concealed in their hair as reported in the Hindustan Times of 26th March, 1989;

(b) if so, the number of persons arrested in this connection; and

(c) what action is contemplated by Government against the persons involved in smuggling of gold?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Officers of Madras Customs House searched 13 Sri Lankan nationals who had arrived at Madras airport from Colombo on 23rd March, 1989. The search led to the recovery and seizure of gold bars weighing 4.162 Kgs. worth Rs. 13.61 lakhs which had been concealed in their scalps. The gold bars had been rolled in black coloured cellotapes and pasted on their scalps with the help of specially made glue. In addition one of the passengers had also swallowed three gold balls weighing 180 grammes worth Rs. 58,000/- approximately which were also recovered and seized. All the 13 passengers were arrested and remanded to judicial custody. Prosecutions have been launched against all the 13 persons in a Court of Law.

(c) Persons found to be involved in smuggling of gold are liable for penalty in departmental adjudications and are also to be prosecuted in Courts of Law. They are also liable to be detained under the provisions of Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974.

Pollution in the Capital

1108. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the pollution level in the Capital is rapidly increasing due to scarcity of civic amenities, traffic congestion, etc;

(b) if so, whether Government have since initiated any steps to save the Capital from pollution; and

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A Statement is attached. (*See* below).